a game of you

part three

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the SANDMAN™

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

NEW YORK.

2:00 AM.

LEAVE ME ALONE, JUDY... BY THE GODDESS... JUST LEAVE ME...

NO!

ALONE...

HAZEL? IS THAT YOU?

I... I THINK... I HAD A *BAD* DREAM...

SOME KIND OF NIGHTMARE...

YEAH. I WAS... I THINK I WAS HAVING A DREAM TOO. A *REALLY* BAD ONE. THERE WAS THIS... SOMEBODY I USED TO KNOW...

IT WAS LIKE IT WAS REALLY *HAPPENING*...

SHIT!

MY HEART'S STILL THUMPING. FEELS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BURST OUT OF MY CHEST.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT IT WAS ONLY A DREAM. IT WAS HORRIBLE.

WHAT WAS IT ABOUT?

...I DON'T REMEMBER.

I FEEL SICK. I'M GOING TO GET A DRINK OF WATER.

NO! LOOK-- PLEASE DON'T GO... HOLD ME. PLEASE.

FOX? YOU'RE SHAKING.

WE'RE BOTH SHAKING.

I'M SCARED. ISN'T THAT DUMB?

I DON'T DARE GO BACK TO SLEEP.

I'M SCARED TOO, HAZEL. BUT IT'S OKAY.

THE BAD DREAMS ARE ALL OVER.

LOOK--I'LL TURN ON THE LIGHT.

THERE.

NOTHING'S GOING TO HURT US NOW. SEE?

EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT.

BAD MOON RISING

WRITTEN BY NEIL GAIMAN • DRAWN BY COLLEEN DORAN •
COLORED BY DANIEL VOZZO • LETTERED BY TODD KLEIN •
EDITED BY KAREN BERGER • ASSISTED BY ALISA KWITNEY

THE SANDMAN
FEATURING CHARACTERS CREATED BY GAIMAN, KIETH & DRINGENBERG

YOU KNOW THE *REALLY* SCARY THING ABOUT BAD DREAMS?

THE FACT YOU THINK IT'S REALLY HAPPENING?

UH-*UH*. NOT THAT.

IT'S THAT SOMETHING'S GOING ON IN YOUR HEAD, AND YOU CAN'T *CONTROL* IT. I MEAN, IT'S LIKE THERE'S THESE *BAD WORLDS* INSIDE YOU. BUT IT'S JUST *YOU*...

IT'S LIKE YOU'RE BETRAYING YOURSELF.

KNOCK KNOCK!

HELLO? FOXGLOVE? HAZEL? HELLO?

IS ANYBODY THERE?

HELLO. IT'S *ME*. THESSALY. I THINK YOUR DOORBELL'S STOPPED WORKING.

I CAME DOWN TO SEE IF YOU TWO WERE OKAY.

SURE. WE'RE *FINE*. WHY *SHOULDN'T* WE BE FINE?

MM-HMM. WELL, THANKS FOR UM. STOPPING BY.

NO BAD DREAMS?

YES. BAD DREAMS.

I THOUGHT SO.

LOOK, I'M GOING DOWN TO CHECK THAT WANDA AND BARBIE'RE OKAY.

MAYBE ONE OF YOU OUGHT TO COME WITH ME.

OKAY.

WE'LL *BOTH* GO. I DON'T WANT TO BE--TO LEAVE FOX ON HER OWN.

THESSALY? WHAT'S GOING *ON* HERE?

JUST STUFF.

STUFF?

UH HUH.

WANDA? HELLO?

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H-HI. JUH-JESUS *CHRIST*, G-GUYS. DO YOU KNOW WHAT T-T-*TIME* IT IS?

IT'S A LITTLE AFTER TWO.

IT WAS A RHE*TORICAL* FUH-FUH-FUH...

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OH JUH-JESUS. I HAD *SUCH* A HORRIBLE DREAM.

WHATEVER IT WAS, IT'S OVER NOW, WANDA.

LISTEN, BARBIE'S THE ONE I'M REALLY WORRIED ABOUT.

BARBIE?

BARBIE?

HONEY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? IT'S *ME*.

BARBIE'S IN *TROUBLE?*

I CAN HEAR THE TV. SHE *MUST* BE *IN* THERE.

MAYBE SHE'S JUST ASLEEP.

BARBIE ONCE GAVE ME A SPARE SET OF HER KEYS. SHE WAS WORRIED SHE'D LOSE HERS.

I MEAN, I *COULD* LET US IN. IF YOU REALLY THINK THERE'S SOMETHING *WRONG*.

THERE'S *DEFINITELY* SOMETHING WRONG.

YOU'D BETTER OPEN THE DOOR.

BARBIE? HELLO?

BARBIE? IT'S *US*. NOTHING TO BE *SCARED* OF.

SHE CAN'T HEAR YOU, WANDA.

FOXGLOVE: YOU'RE NEAREST THE LIGHTSWITCH. CAN YOU TURN IT ON, PLEASE?

JESUS CHRIST! JUST LOOK AT HER.

WHAT *IS* THAT THING?

WHATEVER IT IS, DON'T *ANY* OF YOU *TOUCH* IT, *OR* TRY TO TAKE IT FROM HER.

RIGHT NOW, I'D SUSPECT IT'S ALL THAT'S KEEPING HER *ALIVE*.

WANDA. *YOU'RE* THE BIGGEST OF US. CAN YOU CARRY HER *UPSTAIRS?* AND *CAREFULLY*.

WELL... I...

YOU CAN PUT HER DOWN IN GEORGE'S ROOM.

THE DOOR'S OPEN. YOU CAN ALL GO STRAIGHT IN.

I'LL SEE YOU UP THERE. THERE'S STUFF I NEED TO GET FROM MY ROOM FIRST.

IS SHE FOR *REAL*?

THESSALY? I SUPPOSE SO. I ALWAYS THOUGHT SHE WAS REALLY *DULL*. YOU KNOW. *LIKE* A BIMBO, BUT WITH *BRAINS* INSTEAD OF *LOOKS*.

PROBABLY STUDYING ARCHITECTURE OR SOMETHING.

ART HISTORY.

WHAT?

WE WERE TALKING AT THE *LAUNDROMAT* A FEW WEEKS BACK.

SHE SAID SHE'S STUDYING *ART HISTORY*.

MAYBE WE SHOULD CALL A *DOCTOR*.

WANDA, *WE* WERE BOTH HAVING BAD DREAMS TOO. THESSALY SEEMED TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT IT. AND SHE *KNEW* SOMETHING WEIRD WAS HAPPENING WITH BARBIE.

C'MON SLEEPING BEAUTY...

UP YOU COME, MISSY.

WANDA?

YEAH?

YOU'VE GOT A *THINGIE*.

GEORGE'S ROOM, HUH? I THINK HE'S A *CREEP*. HE *STARES* AT ME.

HAZEL. DIDN'T *ANYONE* EVER TELL YOU THAT IT'S NOT POLITE TO DRAW ATTENTION TO A LADY'S SHORTCOMINGS?

THIS IS TURNING INTO A *REALLY* WEIRD EVENING.

YOU *KNOW* THAT?

WELL, GEORGE'S DOOR *IS* OPEN.

HEY *GEORGE*, WHEREVER YOU ARE-- *IT'S ONLY US!*

GEE. I *SAID* HE WAS CREEPY, DIDN'T I? DIDN'T I *SAY* HE WAS CREEPY? LOOK AT *THIS*. IT'S A PHOTO OF *BARBIE*. I MEAN, IT'S *BARBIE!*

THAT'S CREEPY.

YOU'D BETTER PUT HER DOWN ON THE COUCH, I SUPPOSE.

THESSALY? WHAT'S GOING *ON* HERE? THIS IS ALL SO *WEIRD*.

I THINK YOU *REALLY* OWE US SOME KIND OF EXPLANATION.

ME TOO AND WHERE'S OUR *HOST*? WHERE'S *GEORGE*?

HE'S IN THE BATHTUB.

GEORGE IS TAKING A BATH? JESUS H. CHRIST ON A *BICYCLE*, THESSALY--

HE ISN'T *TAKING* A BATH: HE'S IN THE BATHTUB. IT SEEMED THE BEST PLACE TO PUT HIM.

I KILLED HIM.

HE'S DEAD.

YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?

HAHA.

YOU HAVEN'T REALLY KILLED ANYONE...?

I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT MAKING JOKES, HAZEL.

GO AND LOOK. HE'S IN THE BATHROOM.

OH MYYY GAHHHHHD.

MOVE OVER. I CAN'T SEE.

EW. GROSS.

I...I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE, THESSALY. BUT...

BUT I'M GOING TO CALL THE POLICE. AND A DOCTOR FOR BARBIE.

UH-UH. NO WAY.

I'M SORRY, GUYS. YOU AREN'T GOING TO CALL ANYONE. YOU MUSTN'T.

NO. FOX IS--SHE'S RIGHT, THESS. I MEAN, SURE GEORGE WAS A CREEP. BUT YOU CAN'T-- I MEAN, YOU CAN'T JUST GO AROUND KILLING PEOPLE.

I--I DON'T LIKE THE COPS EITHER, BUT WE HAVE TO CALL THEM...

I'M REALLY SORRY. I DON'T THINK I'M EXPLAINING THINGS VERY WELL.

UH. LET ME TRY THIS AGAIN.

YOU AREN'T *GOING* ANYWHERE. YOU AREN'T CALLING *ANYONE*.

NONE OF YOU CAN LEAVE THIS ROOM UNLESS I *WANT* YOU TO. YOU CAN *TRY* IT IF YOU LIKE.

AS FOR THE *REST* OF WHAT'S GOING ON HERE...WELL, *I* DON'T UNDERSTAND IT ALL YET EITHER.

GEORGE HAS A *LOT* OF EXPLAINING TO DO.

YOU KILL *FIRST*, THEN ASK QUESTIONS *AFTER*. YEAH. REAL *BRIGHT*, SUGAR.

NOW--READ MY LIPS: I'M *LEAVING*. DON'T *TRY* TO STOP ME.

GO AHEAD.

RIGHT.

I CAN'T.

SORRY ABOUT THAT, WANDA.

BUT I HONESTLY *DON'T* MEAN YOU ANY HARM. I MAY EVEN NEED YOUR HELP.

YOU'RE A *MURDERER*. YOU *KILLED* HIM.

SURE. I TOLD YOU THAT ALREADY.

ARE--ARE YOU GOING TO KILL *US TOO?*

OF COURSE NOT. WHY WOULD I WANT TO DO *THAT?*

SO, UH. THESSALY. I MEAN. DO YOU WANT TO TELL US WHAT'S ,,, GOING ON?

MM. I DON'T KNOW. NOT *REALLY*. GEORGE WAS SENDING BIRDS AROUND THE HOUSE. BUT NOT *REAL* BIRDS-- MORE LIKE *PROJECTIONS* OF SOME KIND.

MALEVOLENT LITTLE THINGS.

THEY WERE GIVING YOU THE BAD DREAMS.

BARBIE'S ALL TIED INTO THIS *SOMEHOW*. I'M NOT SURE HOW, BUT I'LL FIND OUT.

YOU SEE, I HAVE REALLY *BAD FEELINGS* ABOUT ALL THIS.

YOU HAVE "REALLY BAD FEELINGS?"

SO,,, UM... HOW ARE YOU GOING TO "FIND OUT"?

I'M GOING TO ASK GEORGE.

YOU--YOU REALLY *WEREN'T* JOKING, THEN?

LIKE I SAID: I DON'T *MAKE* JOKES. I JUST NEVER GOT THE KNACK.

THERE'S STUFF I HAVE TO DO, NOW. YOU CAN'T LEAVE THE ROOM, BUT YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE.

IT HAS BEEN MANY YEARS, BUT HER HANDS REMEMBER. THEY TOUCH THE SKIN AND KNOW THE FLESH BENEATH THE SKIN; REMEMBER OTHER FACES...

THE EARS ARE IMPORTANT, THAT IT CAN HEAR.

WHAT'S SHE DOING IN THERE?

I... I'M NOT SURE.

SHE MAKES THE INITIAL INCISION BEHIND THE LEFT EAR. A PUSH AND THE BLADE PIERCES THE SKIN; A FURTHER PUSH AND SHE'S SLICING THROUGH THE MEAT.

YOU MEAN YOU KNOW?

I DON'T THINK I WANT TO KNOW.

SHE SLIDES IT AT AN ANGLE; THE BLADE TOUCHES BONE AND SHE LIFTS AS SHE CUTS.

WHY CAN'T WE LEAVE THE ROOM?

HYPNOTISM, MAYBE?

UH-UH. WITCHCRAFT.

LESS BLOOD FLOWS THAN SHE FEARED; ALREADY IT IS POOLING IN THE TORSO AND LEGS.

SLICING ACROSS THE HAIRLINE, CAREFUL NOT TO RIP OR TEAR, CUTTING WITH ONE HAND, AS SHE PULLS, GENTLY, WITH THE OTHER.

PERHAPS SHE TAKES PRIDE IN HER COMPETENCE; PERHAPS NOT.

WITCHCRAFT? YOU MEAN, LIKE NEW AGE STUFF?

NEW AGE? NO.

AIDED BY HER BLADE THE FLESH SEEMS ALL TOO EAGER TO PART FROM THE BONE.

SHE POCKETS THE EYES LAST, ALMOST AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT.

QUITE THE OPPOSITE, REALLY.

BANG! BANG!

oh god. i think i'm going to be sick.

EARS TO HEAR...

NOW, EYES TO SEE...

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO VOMIT, YOU SHOULD PINCH YOUR UPPER LIP, REALLY HARD.

GIVE ME A BREAK

AND LAST OF ALL A TONGUE, TO SPEAK WITH...

THERE.

OKAY, GEORGE. I WANT A **WORD** WITH YOU, YOUNG MAN.

GEORGE? TIME TO COME BACK.

WHO..WHO CALLS ME? WHO...

WHO DARES... CALL ME BACK... FROM THE HIGH SHORE...OF THE SILENT RIVER?

mulp. moh mgod...

IF YOU'RE **GOING** TO **PUKE**, FOR **CHRISSAKES** USE THE **BATHROOM**.

ARE YOU **KIDDING**? WITH THAT **THING** IN THE BATH?

SHH!

I DARE.

HERE DO I CHARGE YOU AND COMMAND YOU IN ALL THINGS TO SPEAK THE TRUTH, HOLDING BACK NOTHING.

ELSE I SHALL SUMMON THE HOUNDS OF HELL TO WHIP YOUR SHADE THROUGH THE WORLD UNTIL THE MOON FALLS AND THE SUN GROWS COLD.

Mmmmmph.

"I PRAY YOU: TELL ME NOW, AND TELL ME TRULY: WHO **WERE** YOU, AND **WHY** DID YOU ATTEMPT TO HARM ME, AND THESE OTHERS, HERE IN THIS PLACE, THIS NIGHT?"

Mrooolphhh.

"I... I AM... I WAS... GWAS-Y-GOG. A SERVANT OF THE CUCKOO."

SO **WHAT** WERE YOU TRYING TO DO TONIGHT?

THE CUCKOO WAS TO... CONSUME ...EACH OF YOU...

IT... NEEDED SOMEONE TO... DESTROY THE BAUBLE... THE PRINCESS'S BAUBLE...

THE CUCKOO... MUST FLY...

THE CUCKOO SENT ME HERE... IT CAME TO ME... NIGHT AFTER NIGHT... IN MY DREAMS... IT SHOWED ME THE WOMAN...

PRINCESS BARBARA...

SHE WAS PROMISED TO ME...

THE CUCKOO PROMISED ME...

PROMISED ME... MANY THINGS...

MANY WONDERFUL THINGS...

C'MON WANDA-WOMAN. WAKE **UP**. WAKE-THE-FUG-**UP**.

"WHAT **IS** THE CUCKOO?"

"I... DO NOT... KNOW... IT IS THE CUCKOO..."

"WHERE CAN I **FIND** THE CUCKOO?"

"IN ITS REALM... IN... THE... DREAM..."

OW!

"IT... SENT ME... MY BROTHERS..."

"YES...

"THE **BIRDS**?"

"FOR THE FIRST TIME... I WAS NOT ALONE... THEY LIVED INSIDE ME... EVEN IN THE DARK THEY WHISPERED TO ME...

"COMFORTED ME...

"LOVED ME..."

BARBIE'S DREAM?

...YES.

I SEE.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW.

DO YOU...THEN... DISMISS ME...?

I DO NOT.

NOT YET.

LET ME... DIE...

PLEASE...JUST LET ME DIE...

SILENCE FROM YOU NOW, UNTIL I BID YOU SPEAK AGAIN.

WELL, THIS IS A PRETTY PICKLE, I MUST SAY.

YOU KNOW, OF ALL THE THINGS I DON'T BELIEVE ABOUT THIS EVENING, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU SAID THAT THE MOST.

"A PRETTY PICKLE"? WHAT THE HELL IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

YOU'RE LIKE CUTTING OFF FACES AND KILLING PEOPLE AND...AND...

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING TONIGHT: IT'S WITCHCRAFT, ISN'T IT?

YES.

I DID SOME WITCHY STUFF FOR A BIT. I MEAN, NOT LIKE THAT. NOTHING EVER ACTUALLY HAPPENED. AND, LIKE, NOTHING WITH DEAD BODIES OR STUFF LIKE THAT.

HUH?

THAT WAS BEFORE I MET YOU, HAZE.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS. I DON'T UNDERSTAND TONIGHT.

NO? OKAY: A COUPLE OF HOURS AGO GEORGE'S BOSS--THE CUCKOO -- ATTEMPTED TO ASSUME CONTROL OF OUR DREAMS.

IT WAS GOING TO USE US AS ITS HANDS.

WHY?

TO DESTROY THAT PIECE OF JEWELRY. I ASSUME IT PLANNED TO HURT BARBIE.

WHY? I MEAN--IF IT NEEDED THIS SHIT DONE, WHY COULDN'T GEORGE HAVE DONE IT?

GEORGE HAS ALREADY GIVEN HIMSELF TO THE CUCKOO. I DON'T THINK HE COULD HAVE...

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS THAT THING?

I'M NOT TOTALLY SURE. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT FOR A VERY LONG TIME. IF IT'S LIKE THE ONE I REMEMBER, IT'S SOME KIND OF DREAM-STONE.

LISTEN, I'M NOT SURE I'M REALLY FOLLOWING ALL THIS. BUT THIS *THING*, THIS *CUCKOO*. IT'S TRYING TO *HURT* BARBIE?

YES.

THEN... WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING TO TRY AND *STOP* IT. WE HAVE TO HELP BARBIE.

HELP HER? WELL, YES. THAT AS WELL. *MORE IMPORTANT*, THIS CUCKOO TRIED TO HARM *ME*. I REALLY *DON'T* TAKE THINGS LIKE THAT LIGHTLY.

IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY.

YOU REALLY WANT TO HELP?

YES.

SURE.

...OKAY.

RIGHT. I'LL NEED SOME MENSTRUAL BLOOD. *FOXGLOVE*?

HUH? WHY *ME*?

BECAUSE *YOU'RE* MENSTRUATING. NO ONE ELSE HERE IS.

HAZEL'S PREGNANT, WANDA'S A MAN...

...AND I HAVEN'T MENSTRUATED FOR A LONG TIME.

HAZEL'S NOT *PREGNANT*.

WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS LATER.

HAZEL?

PLEASE, FOX. NOT *NOW*.

IT'S--IT'S NOT A VERY HEAVY FLOW. THERE WON'T BE MUCH.

A FEW DROPS OF MOON'S BLOOD WILL BE ENOUGH.

BUT THE DREAM KING HAS LITTLE TIME FOR YOU WOMEN, AND EVEN LESS FOR MY KIND; WHILE THE MOON IS EVER OURS.

IT'S TIME TO DRAW DOWN THE *MOON*.

YOU SEE, THERE ARE TWO WAYS INTO ANOTHER'S DREAMS. WE CAN GO THROUGH THE DREAM KING; OR WE CAN GO BY THE MOON'S ROAD.

WE DID THIS. OR SOMETHING *LIKE* THIS.

WE HAD WATER AND SALT, NOT BLOOD. AND WHITE CANDLES.

WE INVOKED THE GODDESS IN HER ASPECT AS THE MOON. WE CALLED DOWN HER POWER...

DID SHE *ANSWER* YOU?

WELL, IT FELT *GOOD* AT THE *TIME*. EMPOWERING.

HMPH.

YOU TWO: FOXGLOVE, YOU GO *OPPOSITE* ME, HAZEL, ON MY SIDE. *WANDA*, YOU STAY OVER THERE WITH BARBIE.

BUT...

WANDA.

OKAY.

GORGO, MORMO, ERESCHIGAL: THREE-FACE WOMAN.

I FETCH YOU, TIE YOU, BIND YOU; THERE ARE NONE LEFT TO SAVE YOU IN THIS OLD WORLD, NONE TO BEAT CYMBALS, AND DISTRACT YOU WITH SHARP CRIES.

WE HAVE WALKED TOGETHER IN THE PAST, YOU AND I.

I HAVE BOUND YOU AS A HARE, AS AN OWL, AS A LANTERN; I HAVE BOUND YOU IN YOUR HOUSE IN THE HEAVENS; NOW I CALL YOU DOWN TO ME.

WE ARE OLD FRIENDS, YOU AND I.

SHE WHO DIES AND LIVES AND NEVER DIES, BE HERE FOR ME.

YOU?

YOU SHOULD BE **DEAD**, THESSALIAN.

WHAT WOULD YOU WITH US, DAUGHTER?

WE HAVE NOT BEEN DRAWN DOWN FOR THOUSANDS OF REVOLUTIONS.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE **DOING**?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE **DONE**?

I KNOW **EXACTLY** WHAT I'VE DONE; **AND** WHY I CALLED YOU.

I WANT YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME.

YOU YOU YOU **NEED** NEED NEED SOMETHING THING THING **FROM** FROM FROM ME ME ME?

WHAT HAVE **YOU** GIVEN **ME**?

WHAT HAVE **YOU** DONE FOR **ME**?

WHY SHOULD I DO **ANYTHING** FOR YOU?

YOU WILL DO **EXACTLY** AS I REQUEST. JUST AS I PULLED YOU DOWN FROM THE HEAVENS, YOU ARE MINE TO DISPOSE OF, MINE TO COMMAND.

PERHAPS.

WHERE OTHERS ASK TIMOROUSLY, THESSALIAN, **YOUR** KIND COMMANDED, DIRECTED, ORDERED.

IT **GALLED** US. BUT THE **OTHERS** ARE **DUST** NOW, AND **LESS** THAN **DUST**.

AND **ONE** DAY **YOU**, IN YOUR TURN, WILL **JOIN** THEM. AND **THEN** OUR COMPACT WILL BE OVER, AND **YOU** WILL BE **OURS**, AS **THEY** ARE.

MAYBE. MAYBE NOT. WE'LL SEE.

NOW: LET'S TALK ABOUT *EXACTLY* WHAT I NEED FROM YOU.

ONE THAT HAS TRIED TO HURT ME HIDES IN THAT CHILD'S DREAM. SHE LIES WITH A DREAM-STONE ON HER BREAST.

THESE WOMEN ARE HER FRIENDS.

SEND *US* TO *HER.*

THE REALM OF *DREAMS* IS NOT *OUR* REALM. WHY SHOULD *WE* MEDDLE IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE *DREAM-KING,* SISTER?

BECAUSE YOU *CAN.* BECAUSE I *ORDER* YOU TO.

YOU HAVE DISRUPTED THE *ORDER* OF THINGS ENOUGH THIS NIGHT, THESSALIAN. *ONE* DAY THERE WILL BE A RECKONING.

SO YOU HAVE SAID BEFORE: *YOU* AND OTHERS *LIKE* YOU.

WELL?

WE WILL ACCEDE TO YOUR PLEA.

WE HAVE LITTLE ALTERNATIVE.

BUT *WE* CAN *WAIT.* OUR NIGHT WILL COME.

MUNZGONWEIRDZO. LOOKATTASUMBITCH.

HEY! HEY YOU!

YOU TALKING TO ME, LADY?

LOOK AT THE MOON. SHE LOOK SO STRANGE TONIGHT.

NAH. BETWEEN THE SHIT IN THE AIR AND THE STREET-LIGHTS, YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE MOON AT ALL.

SHE'S GONE. SHE WAS THERE. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. THE MOON'S GONE PALE AS PAIN.

LOOK AT HER.

SO? MAYBE IT'S AN ECLIPSE OR SOMETHING. HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.

NO. THIS WAS SUDDEN. ECLIPSES IS SLOW. IT'S SOMETHING BAD.

AND THERE'S A WIND RISIN'.

I DON'T LIKE DOGS.

YEAH. THAT'S FOR SURE. IT'S GONNA RAIN CATS AND DOGS.

YOU TAKE CARE NOW.

WANDA? YOU KEEP BARBIE SAFE NOW. WE'LL BE BACK BEFORE SUN-RISE, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, AND--

WHAT?

LOOK, BARBIE'S MY FRIEND. I WANT TO HELP HER. I WANT TO GO WITH YOU-- WHEREVER YOU'RE GOING.

WHY CAN'T I HELP? HAZEL? FOXGLOVE? LISTEN...

THIS ISN'T YOUR ROUTE. IT CAN'T BE. I'M SORRY.

WHAT YOU'RE DOING'S EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT. GUARD BARBIE. DON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO HER.

YOU'RE A FRIGGIN' LUNATIC, THESSALY! YOU KNOW THAT?

WHATEVER'S GOING ON HERE, YOU'RE A GODDAMN LOONY-TUNE!

FOX! HAZEL! SOMEONE--LISTEN TO ME...

I TELL 'EM WHAT I SEE, LADY. JES' NOBODY *LISTENS* TO ME, IS ALL.

CRAZY OLD LADY TALK. NOBODY LISTENS TO A CRAZY OLD LADY.

FIRST YOU'RE THERE, THEN YOU'RE GONE, NOW YOU'RE THERE AGAIN.

YOU *LAUGHIN'* AT ME, LADY?

MOON GOES AWAY. MOON COMES BACK. *THAT* AIN'T NATURAL.

NOBODY LOOKS UP IN THE *SKY* ANY MORE.

WELL, IT'S JUST *YOU* AND *ME*, BARBIE-BUBULEH.

YOU KNOW SOMETHING *WEIRD*?

WELL, ALL RIGHT. *DON'T* TALK. *I* DON'T MIND.

I CAN'T HANDLE *ANY* OF THIS.

BUT I DON'T *CARE*. I FIGURE, WHAT THE HELL. IT'S LIKE WE FELL DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE, WOKE UP IN... I DON'T KNOW. STEPHEN KING'S BASEMENT.

YOU KNOW WHAT'S *REALLY* SPOOKY?

HAZEL AND FOXGLOVE.

I MEAN, THEY JUST FELL *INTO* IT. LIKE IT WAS ALL NATURAL AS *ANYTHING*. *I*, ON THE OTHER HAND, *SQUEAL* AND *TOSS* MY *COOKIES*.

MAYBE I'M NOT THE WOMAN I THOUGHT I WAS.

WELL, CHEER UP: THE CAVALRY ARE ON THEIR WAY INTO YOUR DREAMS, TO HELP YOU FIGHT A SCARY NUMBER CALLED THE CUCKOO WHO WANTS YOU **DEAD**.

UNLESS THIS IS ALL SOME PARANOID WITCHY FANTASY OF THESSALY'S. WHICH IS AS POSSIBLE AS ANYTHING ELSE.

BRR. THE **SCARIEST** LITTLE MISS GOODY-TWO-SHOES I EVER MET. I KEPT EXPECTING HER TO TURN INTO MARGARET HAMILTON...

BIZARRE, HUH?

BUT, JESUS, **WE'RE** THE **GOOD GUYS**--**YOU** AND **ME** AND **FOXGLOVE** AND **HAZEL**. AND THESSALY. **MAYBE**.

I OUGHTA GET FOX TO WRITE ONE OF HER **STORIES** ABOUT US.

UM... THE BIMBOS OF NIGHT.

NIGHT OF THE BIMBOS.

THE NIGHT BIMBOS...

"BIMBOS OF DER NIGHT. VOT MUSIC ZEY MAKE. HEHEHEH..."

ONLY JOKING.

RIGHT. I'M GUARDING YOU. I HOPE YOU **APPRECI-ATE** THAT.

IT'S JUST YOU AND ME, DULLINK. YOU, ME, AND A SKINNED CORPSE IN THE BATHTUB.

I'M NOT GOING **BACK** IN THERE, I'M WARNING YOU.

IF WORST COMES TO WORST, I'LL PEE OUT THE **WINDOW**.

IT'S GONNA BE A **LONG** NIGHT...

UH EXCUSE ME UH MISS WANDA.

UH CAN WE TALK?

End of Chapter Three

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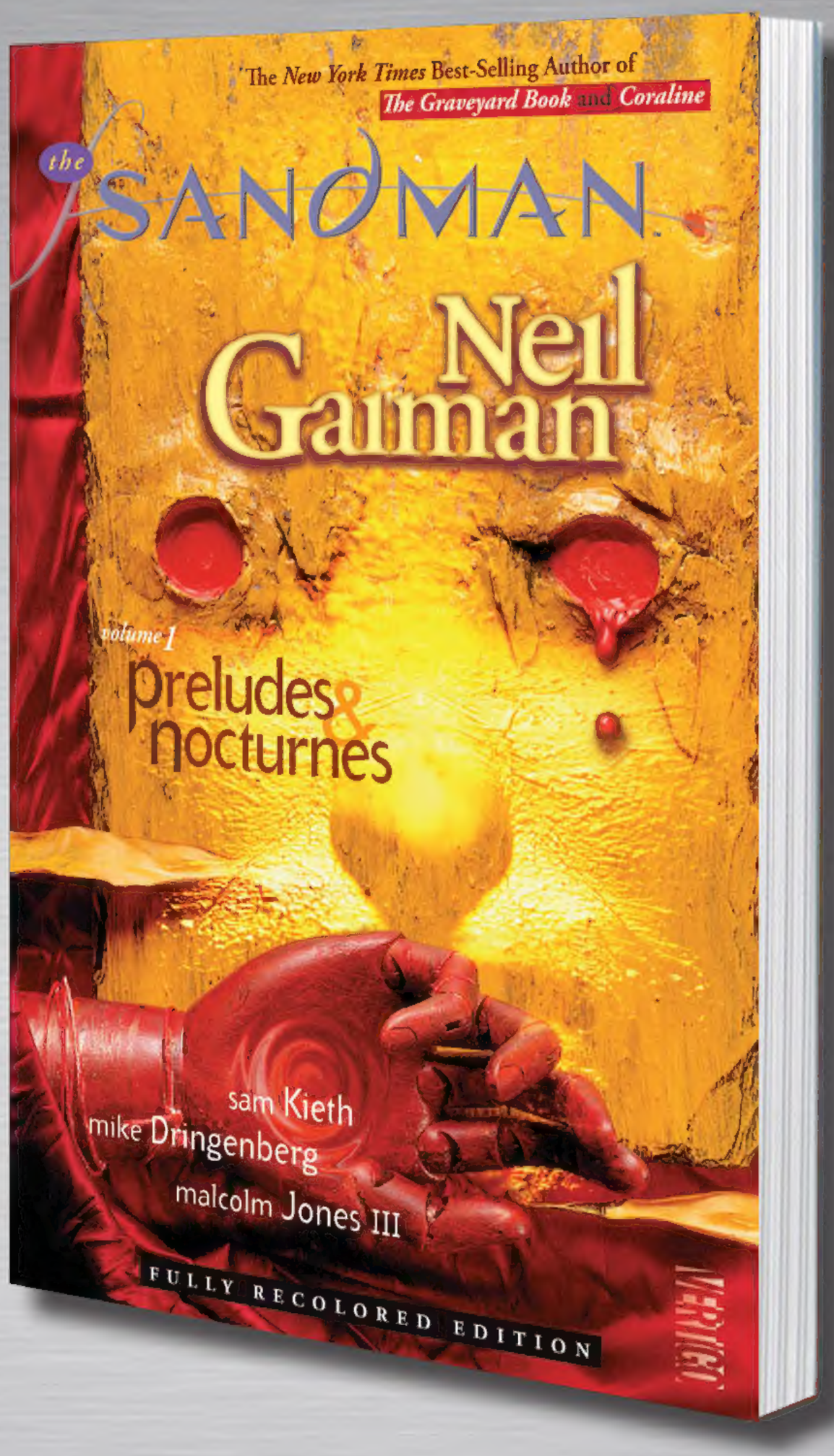

THE SANDMAN VOL. 4:
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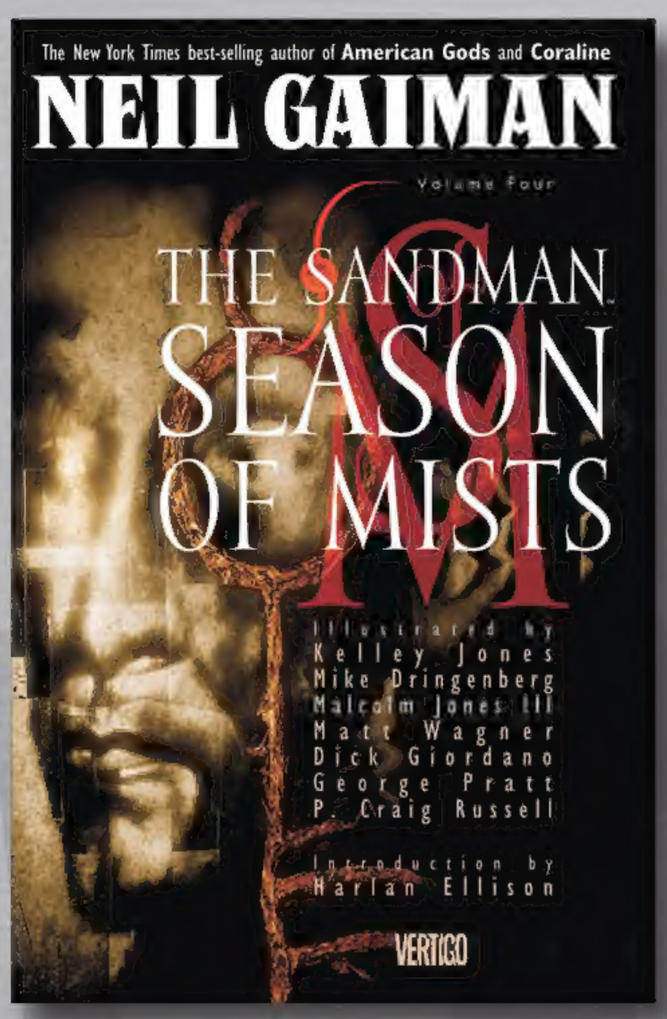

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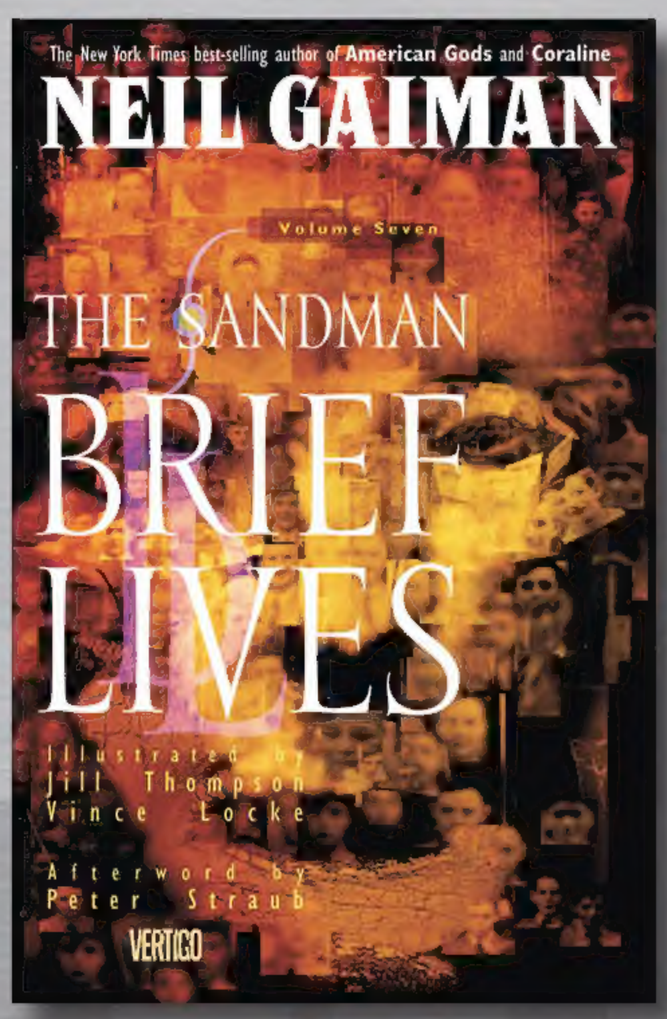
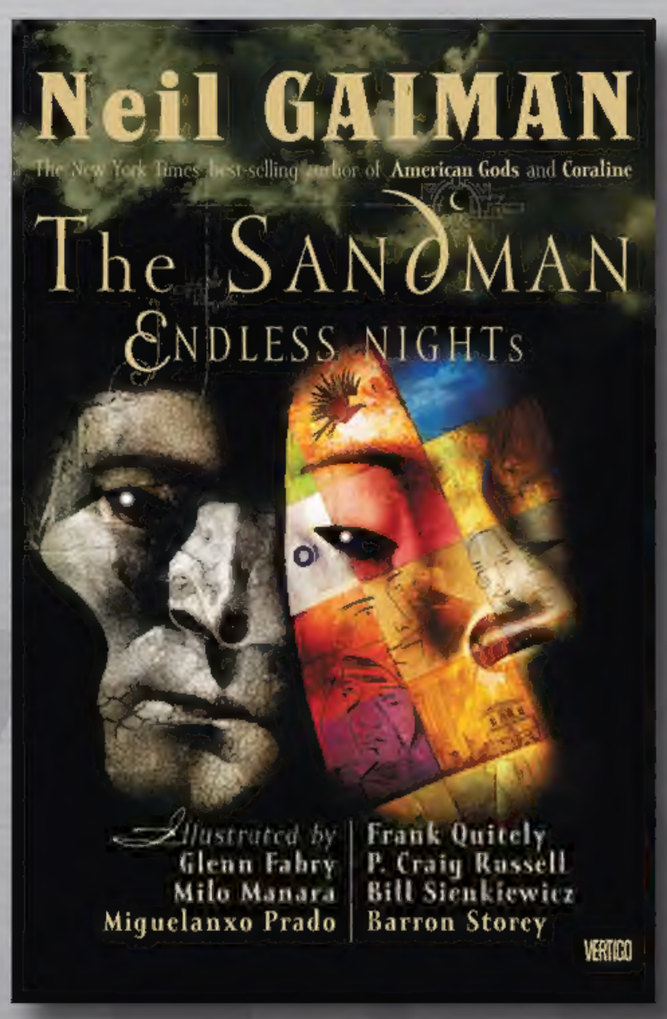


THE SANDMAN:
ENDLESS NIGHTS



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